



Issue: June 17, 2010

JBSA front and center for energy efficiency

By Brent Boller
502nd ABW Public Affairs

Joint Base San Antonio was front and center during a sustainable energy workshop hosted by the Defense Transformation Institute June 9 at the Pearl Stable in San Antonio.

JBSA is the largest single Department of Defense enterprise for installation support. One of the biggest consumers of energy in DoD, JBSA is the largest energy user and customer for CPS Energy, San Antonio's city-owned utility.



Brig. Gen. Leonard Patrick, 502nd Air Base Wing commander, opened the conference by emphasizing that his command is proud to be a leader in the ongoing quest to use energy more efficiently. The 502nd ABW is responsible for executing the installation support mission for JBSA.

The general noted that a culture shift is underway to ensure Airmen make energy a consideration in everything they do. "Every Airman coming into the Air Force at Lackland Air Force Base now is getting the message that they must be good stewards of the environment by becoming conscious of water and electricity use and waste," Patrick said.

The general cited several projects and programs across all three local joint base installations, including major lighting and water retrofits, window treatments and solar array heating systems, among other efforts.

"We'll have constant energy policies and initiatives across all the installations of Joint Base San Antonio," he said.

The workshop was also attended by representatives from private industry who spoke of new technologies and collaboration efforts. Patrick referenced the recently announced initiative by CPS Energy to commit up to \$50 million over 10 years to sustainable energy research at the University of Texas at San Antonio as one of those innovative, collaborative ideas.

Dr. Les Shephard, the director for the Institute for Conventional, Alternative and Renewable Energy at UTSA, cited some of the challenges which would be faced by JBSA and other organizations pursuing sustainable energy projects.

“I think the general challenges are probably consistent; new technology often has more expensive costs for electricity generation, the reliability of these systems can be lower than desired, the challenges associated with limited storage as it relates to intermittent energy sources, and the cyber and physical security of energy systems,” Shephard said.

“We all must manage resources today mindful of future needs,” said Sid Saunders of the Defense Transformation Institute and one of the workshop organizers. “DTI acts as an intermediary between the military and the community to improve efficiencies and collaboration,” he said.

Saunders emphasized that the term renewable refers to the energy source – solar, wind and other technologies, while the term sustainable means maintaining it over the long haul.

Patrick said JBSA is a microcosm of what’s going on at other joint base locations and the DoD. In his closing remarks at the workshop, the general said he looked forward to continued involvement.

“In the end it is relationships found here which will carry us forward,” he said.